

Argument in Favor of Proposition 70

California Indian Tribes have come forward with this initiative and volunteered to pay millions of dollars from their gaming revenues to help California taxpayers. We want to pay our fair share, which means we would pay the same as any other business pays in state taxes.

We would not pay any more or any less – just the same as everybody else. We think that is fair, even though the law exempts Indian tribes from paying taxes on income from gaming activities on Indian lands. We want to pay our fair share to help California out of the financial problems that our political leaders have created.

When California Indians were rounded up and forced onto land that nobody wanted, they were given the sovereignty to run their own affairs without interference. Now, after decades of hardship, many tribes have been able to achieve some success. Gaming revenues have finally allowed many tribes to provide education, housing, and healthcare for their members.

As history has sadly shown, however, there are some who now want to take the good fortune away from the successful Indians.

We are very thankful that the people of California voted time and again to respect Indian sovereignty and support Indians' rights to conduct gaming operations on tribal lands.

Now we are once again forced to go directly to the voters and bypass the politicians in Sacramento. After misspending the State surplus, they are trying to get California Indian tribes to make up the difference. They want to come onto our reservations and tell us how to run our businesses. They won't negotiate with Indian tribes one-by-one, but insist that we all accept a deal that was only negotiated by a few.

Our initiative is very simple and straightforward: We will pay millions of dollars to the State; in return, we want to be able to run our tribal businesses like any other businesses.

SUBJECT TO COURT
ORDERED CHANGES

This Proposition will ban new casinos that are NOT on Indian Reservations, unlike Proposition 68, which would result in casinos throughout California.

This Proposition will lead to new agreements allowing each tribe to decide for itself how many casinos and what types or how many games it wishes to operate on its tribal lands. Tribes would get to make these decisions, like other businesses, without government interference. Market forces would determine the best decisions.

Under the new agreements, tribes would prepare environmental impact reports and develop a good-faith plan to mitigate any significant adverse environmental impacts after consultation with the public and local governments.

And just like any other business that has the right to decide what kind of business to operate, Indian tribes would pay on their gaming revenues the equivalent of what other businesses pay as an income tax. This is basically a win-win for everyone.

That's why California's Indian tribes need your help once again to stand up for what's fair. Together, we will be living up to the promises made to California's Indians.

Richard M. Milanovich
Tribal Chairman, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians

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